



# NORTHERN HARDWOOD NOTES

## Lake States Management Differs From Northeast

There are "northern hardwoods" in the Lake States and "northern hardwoods" in the Northeast. The term is the same but the forest cover types, stand, and site conditions can be very different. The silvicultural treatments that work in the Northeast may not work at all in the Lake States. And what works in the Lake States will work-but not the best-in the Northeast.

The biggest differences are in regeneration cuttings. Clearcutting works extremely well in the Northeast, but in the Lake States 30 years after clearcutting pioneer tree species or even grass and dense herbaceous cover may still prevail. Strip and small patch cuttings succeed in the Northeast but seldom in the Lake States. Low stocking levels in partial cuttings can be used in the Northeast without losing bole quality; not so in the Lake States.

Climate has the most to do with these regional differences, especially the amount and distribution of precipitation. The Lake States borders on the prairie zone and gets 28-34 inches annually compared with more than 45 inches in the Northeast and more than 60 inches in the Appalachians. Dry periods are more common during the Lake States growing season. Also, most of the northern hardwood area in the Northeast lies at lower latitudes than in the Lake States area so temperatures tend to be higher. The greater warmth and moisture favor more rapid decomposition of litter and better seedbeds so that some tree species can regenerate before competing herbs.

Partly because of climate-the soil depth, drainage, and exposure are more favorable to certain species in the Northeast. Paper birch is of better quality there and thus is a preferred species. Management encourages its production.

The complex of maple-beech-birch species is so varied that it would be better to describe forest cover types according to the SAF standards than use the catch-all phrase "northern hardwoods." This would help in matching cover types to the best silvicultural practices.

## Reference

Smith, David M. What's different about northeastern silviculture? In: Future of forest industry in New England and Eastern Canada: papers presented at the 42d Yale Industrial Forestry Seminar; 1976 January 21-22; Amherst, MA; University of Massachusetts; 1976: 79-84.

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